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Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4538th meeting

Wednesday, 22 May 2002, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Jayakumar	(Singapore)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Chungong Ayafor
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Fall
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Mexico	Ms. Lajous
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation in Africa

Ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

02-39372 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Africa

Ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Algeria, Angola, Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Burundi, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Djibouti, Egypt, Gabon, Gambia, India, Japan, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Tunisia, Ukraine, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Baali (Algeria), Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola), Mr. Dauth (Australia), Mr. Saleh (Bahrain), Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh), Mr. Adechi (Benin), Mr. Nteturuye (Burundi), Mrs. Chassou (Costa Rica), Mr. Djangone-Bi (Côte d'Ivoire), Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba), Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti), Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt), Mr. Dangue Réwaka (Gabon), Mr. Grey-Johnson (Gambia), Mr. Gopinathan (India), Mr. Motomura (Japan), Mr. Dorda (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), Mr. Lamba (Malawi), Mr. Ouane (Mali), Mr. Bennouna (Morocco), Mr. Dos Santos (Mozambique), Mr. Sharma (Nepal), Mr. Apata (Nigeria), Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan), Mr. Lee (Republic of Korea), Mr. Gasana (Rwanda), Mr. Fall (Senegal), Mr. Kamara (Sierra Leone), Mr. Hashi (Somalia), Mr. Kumalo (South Africa), Mr. Arias (Spain), Mr. Mejdoub (Tunisia), Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine), Mr. Mwakawago (United Republic of Tanzania) and Mr. Musambachime (Zambia) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Jagdish Koonjul, Chairman of the ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa.

It is so decided.

I invite Ambassador Koonjul to take a seat at the Council table.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 20 May 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Mauritius to the United Nations, which reads as follows:

> "On behalf of the Organization of African Unity, I have the honour to request that the Security Council extend an invitation to Ambassador Amadou Kébé, Permanent Observer of the Organization of African Unity to the United Nations, to address the Council under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure during the Council's consideration of the item entitled 'The situation in Africa — Ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa'."

That letter will be published as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/2002/554.

Unless I hear any objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 to His Excellency Mr. Amadou Kébé.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Amadou Kébé to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Ivan Šimonović, President of the Economic and Social Council.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Šimonović to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Ibrahima Fall, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

It is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I am very pleased to welcome everyone to this open meeting to discuss the ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa. On behalf of the Council, I wish to extend a warm welcome to Mr. Ivan Šimonović, President of the Economic and Social Council; Mr. Amadou Kébé, Permanent Observer of the Organization of African Unity; and Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Ibrahima Fall.

Permit me to make a few introductory comments concerning our meeting today.

The ad hoc Working Group was established at the end of February following an open debate on Africa under the Security Council presidency of Mauritius in January. It has since met on three occasions under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul, Permanent Representative of Mauritius.

The background, purpose and format of this meeting have been fully explained in the joint letter of 13 May 2002 from the Permanent Representatives of Singapore and Mauritius. This letter has been sent to all permanent missions and permanent observer missions to the United Nations.

In brief, today's meeting on the work of the Group is envisaged as an "outreach" session. The Chair of the Group will explain its role, function and programme of work. More importantly, today's meeting will give the wider membership an opportunity to provide its input and feedback on the work of the group. In this regard, while taking all views into account, we would like especially to ensure that the concerns and preoccupations of the continent are taken into consideration in the future work of the Group. Hence, the Security Council will be in active listening mode today. Council members will be reacting in an informal way, where appropriate, to the statements made by non-Council members. In this way, I hope that we will have a truly frank and interactive discussion.

At the end of the meeting, I intend, under my own responsibility, to sum up the discussion by drawing oral conclusions that can be fed into the future work of the Group.

Finally, we see this meeting as a substantial follow-up to the Council presidency of Mauritius in January, during which the concept of the Group was first proposed to give sharper focus to African issues considered by the Council and as a stepping stone to our future discussions on this matter.

The Security Council will now hear a briefing by the Chairman of the ad hoc Working Group on Africa, Mr. Jagdish Koonjul.

Mr. Koonjul: I would like first of all to thank the delegation of Singapore for arranging this meeting and for giving me, as Chairman of the Security Council ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, the opportunity to brief the wider membership on the Working Group's role, functions and programme of work. I am very grateful to Ambassador Mahbubani for bringing Africa back into the focus of the Security Council's work. This meeting is particularly significant, as it is taking place just a few days before the celebrations of Africa Day. I look forward to hearing the comments and proposals of non-Council members with respect to the work of the Group.

I am particularly pleased to note the participation of Ambassador Ivan Šimonović, President of the Economic and Social Council, and of Ambassador Amadou Kébé, Permanent Observer of the Organization for African Unity (OAU) in this meeting. Their presence bears testimony to the commitment of the Economic and Social Council and of the OAU in the field of conflict prevention and resolution in Africa.

Mr. President, you have mentioned earlier that the idea of the establishment of the ad hoc Working Group on Africa was raised in January this year during the public meeting on the situation in Africa under the Mauritius presidency. In presidential statement S/PRST/2002/2, adopted after the public meeting, the Council indicated that it would consider the setting up

of an ad hoc working group to monitor the recommendations contained in S/PRST/2002/2 and to enhance coordination with the Economic and Social Council.

The Security Council subsequently established an ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa at the end of February, with the following mandate: first, to monitor the implementation of the provisions contained in presidential statement S/PRST/2002/2 and previous presidential statements and resolutions regarding conflict prevention and resolution in Africa; secondly, to propose recommendations on the enhancement of cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as with other United Nations agencies dealing with Africa; thirdly, to examine, in particular, regional and cross-conflict issues that affect the Council's work on African conflict prevention and resolution; fourthly, to propose recommendations to the Security Council to enhance cooperation in conflict prevention and resolution between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in Africa.

In establishing and drawing up the terms of reference of the ad hoc Working Group, there was a clear understanding among Council members that: first, the ad hoc Working Group would not duplicate work of the Security Council; secondly, the ad hoc Working Group would assist the Council in dealing with specific issues pertaining to Africa for which there could be a value-added contribution; and thirdly, the ad hoc Working Group would report to the Council whenever appropriate.

At its first meeting, members of the ad hoc Working Group held a brainstorming session in order to reflect on how the Group could best implement its mandate. There was a very rich exchange of views, and the Chair was tasked with drawing up a programme of work, bearing in mind that it should act selectively and be pragmatic, concrete and active, especially in its early stages.

Subsequently, the Group agreed on a concise programme of work as follows: enhancing cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as with other United Nations agencies; confidence-building in the region of the Manu River Union; enhancing the role of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in Africa; election observation and assistance to electoral processes in Africa; the establishment of groups of friends for specific conflict situations; cooperation with the Organization for African Unity and with subregional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Community, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the Community of Sahel-Saharan States and others; enlisting the contribution of non-governmental organizations, universities and the academia in the work of the group.

Let me now elaborate a little on the work programme. With respect to the Economic and Social Council, the importance of the economic rehabilitation and reconstruction of a country emerging from conflict cannot be underestimated. We greatly value the decision of the Economic and Social Council to set up an advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict. The responsibilities of the Security Council in a conflict situation and those of the Economic and Social Council in the post-conflict stage should be coordinated in a harmonized manner.

It is in this spirit that the ad hoc Working Group will invite the President of the Economic and Social Council and its bureau to discuss: ways of enhancing cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council; coordination between the ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa and the Economic and Social Council's ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict; concentration on the post-conflict situation in Guinea-Bissau and on the situation in the Central African Republic; discussion of the contribution of other United Nations bodies, the subregional organizations and the Bretton Woods institutions in the prevention and resolution of conflicts.

With regard to confidence-building in the region of the Mano River Union, the Group will look into ways of encouraging cooperation between the countries of the Mano River Union as a means of ensuring peace and stability in that region. It will address the important role that the United Nations Regional Office in West Africa could play in promoting confidence-building measures in the region of the Mano River Union.

With regard to the role of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in Africa, the ad hoc Working Group considers that the Special Representatives appointed by the Secretary-General for conflict situations in Africa already shoulder a huge responsibility in carrying out the Council's policy and implementing its decisions. The Special Representatives of the Secretary-General constitute a vital link between the Council and the parties on the ground. In this context, the Group contemplates working to find ways to enhance the role of Special Representatives in Africa. It intends to consider institutional changes that could be enacted to help the Special Representatives in Africa discharge their functions more efficiently and effectively.

The Working Group has also discussed questions relating to election observation and assistance to electoral processes. In this regard, the Group proposes that the United Nations Secretariat examine different ways in which the United Nations could provide assistance to electoral processes from start to finish, at the request of Member States and in accordance with the established United Nations electoral assistance procedures.

The Working Group is also proposing to take a fresh look at the establishment of groups of friends for specific conflict situations. Drawing from the success encountered by existing groups of friends and the coordinating and drafting groups dealing with specific conflict situations, the ad hoc Working Group would see whether similar practices could be developed for other conflict situations.

With respect to cooperation with the OAU and subregional organizations, the ad hoc Working Group felt that there is a general feeling among the members of the Council that there is a lack of communication and contact between the Council and the OAU. In order to redress the situation, the ad hoc Working Group will be holding meetings on a regular basis with the Permanent Observer of the OAU — and eventually of the African Union — in New York with a view to improving contacts between the OAU/African Union and the Security Council.

The Working Group will also discuss with the Permanent Observer of the OAU/African Union how the Working Group could contribute to the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. The Working Group will also look into the possibility of establishing similar contacts with subregional organizations.

The last point in the programme of work is to enlist the contribution of non-governmental organizations, universities and the academia in the work of the Group. Taking into account the increasingly important role and contribution of non-governmental organizations, universities and the academia in the field of conflict prevention and resolution, the Group will consider the appropriateness of holding working sessions with them as required, on a case-by-case basis.

Even though the Working Group has been very selective in choosing the issues that it is going to be dealing with, the programme of work, as you can see, Mr. President, is quite ambitious, and the ad hoc Working Group is aware of the difficult task that lies ahead.

The views of the non-Council members on how the Working Group can be operationalized to address the situation in Africa in concrete ways will be most welcome. We therefore look forward to the support of non-Council members as we strive to meet our objectives.

Before concluding, I would like to recognize the presence in this room of Mr. Ibrahima Fall, the Assistant Secretary-General. We are most thankful to him for the interest and the commitment he has shown for the work of the ad hoc Working Group. As everyone is aware, Mr. Fall will be leaving New York soon to take up his new assignment as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa. In his new role he will be involved in enhancing linkages in the work of the United Nations and other partners in the subregion, particularly the Economic Community of West African States and the Mano River Union, among others. We would like to wish him full success in this new assignment. The Working Group will look forward to continuing to receive his valuable contribution from Dakar. We wish him all the best.

The President: I thank Mr. Jagdish Koonjul for his comprehensive briefing. I now call on Mr. Ivan Šimonović, President of the Economic and Social Council.

Mr. Šimonović: I would like to thank Singapore for organizing this meeting and the Working Group

Chairperson, Ambassador Koonjul, for his very useful briefing.

It is an honour to participate in this discussion on the initial activities of the Security Council's ad hoc Working Group on Africa, on behalf of the Economic and Social Council. It is another important step in the improvement of cooperation between major United Nations bodies, while respecting fully their individual competencies and mandates.

The international community is indeed increasingly recognizing the importance of addressing conflict prevention and conflict resolution issues in Africa. It is part of the general recognition of the importance of addressing the root causes of violent conflict and the interlinkages among relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and longer-term development for building peace. Effective strategies to deal with conflict prevention and recovery require a comprehensive approach that embraces actions in a wide range of areas, including political, diplomatic, humanitarian, human rights and institutional measures, as well as efforts to promote development. The Economic and Social Council has important responsibilities in these areas. I am very glad that the General Assembly and the Security Council have recognized the contribution that the Economic and Social Council could make to the effective implementation of conflict prevention and recovery strategies.

The Assembly has called upon the Economic and Social Council to focus more on actions that are related to the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. The Security Council, in its meeting in January 2002 on the situation in Africa, reaffirmed the importance of strengthening its cooperation with the Economic and Social Council through greater interaction, in accordance with Article 65 of the Charter.

The Security Council also identified the enhancement of cooperation with the Economic and Social Council as one of the purposes of its newly established ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa. Ambassador Koonjul's report has clearly indicated the commitment of the ad hoc Working Group to cooperation with the Economic and Social Council.

As a central intergovernmental body for coordination in the United Nations system, as well as for undertaking studies and making recommendations to other entities, the Economic and Social Council has Charter-mandated functions that can help in studies and actions dealing with the root causes of violence and the humanitarian assistance, economic, social reconstruction and development and human rights processes that are at the heart of peace-building. The Council's oversight role in matters of development cooperation and humanitarian assistance can have particular value in promoting better integration between relevant policy and operational dimensions, thereby complementing ongoing work that takes place in the General Assembly and the Security Council.

There is a gap between the end of humanitarian assistance and the beginning of systemic development assistance in countries emerging from conflict. This gap can be successfully bridged by the Economic and Social Council undertaking coordinated effort through its functional commissions, agencies, funds and programmes. Enhanced cooperation between the Council and the Bretton Woods institutions is also of utmost importance.

In this regard, of particular importance is the proposal that the Economic and Social Council establish an ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict. At the Council's request, a report of the Secretary-General on the possible mandate, composition and modalities of work of such a group has been prepared. It recommends a flexible, time-limited approach in setting up such an advisory group, at the request of the country concerned. Such a group would review existing arrangements to meet the country's humanitarian, reconstruction and development needs and would make proposals to the Economic and Social Council on how to ensure that the country receives adequate and coordinated assistance in order to prevent the reoccurrence of conflict and promote long-term development.

A draft resolution leading to the establishment of the ad hoc working group will shortly be submitted for consideration by Member States. The Economic and Social Council is scheduled to take it up in the near future, with the aim of first establishing an advisory group and then putting it into practice upon the request of an interested African State.

In closing, I would like to emphasize again the importance of the issues and ideas being raised in

today's meeting and to express my satisfaction at the closer cooperation between the principal organs of the United Nations in attempting to cope with the problems set before us.

The President: I call on His Excellency Mr. Amadou Kébé, Permanent Observer of the Organization of African Unity to the United Nations, to whom the Council extended an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure.

Mr. Kébé (*spoke in French*): Allow me, Mr. President, on behalf of the Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and on my own behalf, to thank your delegation for having organized this debate and, above all, you, Mr. Minister, for having agreed to grace this meeting with your presence, despite a heavy workload.

It is not a coincidence that your delegation made the important decision to include this debate in the Council's programme of work. The main reason for this decision relates to the interest and the commitment that your country has always shown in defending African positions within the Council. There is another reason, referred to directly in the statement of Ambassador Mahbubani, your Permanent Representative, made in this very Chamber on 29 January 2002, in the debate on the situation in Africa, which was initiated by the delegation of Mauritius. Ambassador Mahbubani asked about the results achieved on the African questions debated within the Council. He concluded that "There is no linkage between one debate and another debate on the same subject."

Undeniably, our meeting today marks the first step towards linking one debate to another and to establishing an ongoing solution for all African items discussed in the Council.

On 16 May 2002, I had the great privilege of paying tribute to Ambassador Koonjul, whose tenacity and generosity were led to establishment of the Working Group. The fact that Ambassador Koonjul moved from a generous idea to a reality, and now holds the chairmanship of the Committee is even more commendable. He has been a beacon for us in showing the way forward.

During that same meeting, I exchanged views with members of the Working Group, and I tried with them to define and lay the foundation for cooperation between the OAU and the Group. As I have recalled, the OAU is now at a critical stage in its development. Next July it will cease to exist and will give way to the African Union. Important decisions have now been taken on the establishment of the institutions and organs of the African Union.

One of those decisions relates to a review of the structure, procedures and working methods of the central organ of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. A new protocol was drafted by the OAU secretariat, and it will be submitted for consideration by the Council of Ministers and for approval by the Conference of Heads of State and Government, planned for 8 to 10 July 2002 in Durban, South Africa. The draft protocol contains a proposal to change the name of the Mechanism's Central Organ to the Peace and Security Council. The organs of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Africa will comprise the following: the Peace and Security Council, which will replace the Central Organ; the Commission of the Union, which will replace the current OAU secretariat; and a panel of wise persons, which is a new body.

Mr. President, since I am mindful of the objective of this meeting, and am anxious to respond to your request to encourage an exchange of ideas, I would like to make a few comments on the general approach of the Working Group, and some specific proposals relating to some items on its programme of work. On the subject of the Working Group's overall approach, we in the OAU believe that it should seek to promote and strengthen cooperative mechanisms, first, between the OAU and African subregional organizations in order to harmonize views, rationalize efforts and properly distribute actions in all areas relating to peace and security in Africa. Secondly, it should follow up the implementation of Security Council decisions, in particular those that stem from implementation of recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict (S/1998/318) and in the Brahimi report (S/2000/809). Thirdly, there should be better coordination of actions undertaken by the OAU and African subregional organizations in the area of conflict prevention. Fourthly, all conflict prevention actions should be speeded up, and peacekeeping or peace-building operations in post-conflict situations should be rapidly established.

On the subject of strengthening cooperation with the Economic and Social Council, in our view the

Working Group, in cooperation with the Economic and Social Council ad hoc Advisory Group on African Countries Emerging from Conflict, and in collaboration with the OAU and African subregional organizations, should organize donor conferences, encourage joint missions to assess humanitarian situations, ensure that programmes for reconstruction and rehabilitation, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration be effectively included in all peace agreements, and encourage the Secretaries-General of the OAU and of the United Nations to appoint special envoys for pre-conflict and post-conflict situations.

Regarding the OAU and African subregional organizations, we propose that the Working Group facilitate periodic meetings and constructive dialogue between members of the Security Council and members of the future African Union Peace and Security Council. Such meetings would seek to adapt views and approaches to changing conflict situations and to harmonize decisions and actions in the area of preventive diplomacy and in organizing joint field missions.

Once again, Mr. President, I would like to thank you for having invited me to this meeting and for having allowed me to share these initial proposals with Council members. I am sure that we will have another opportunity to sit down with members of the Working Group to see which of these proposals could ultimately be endorsed, and that we will see a fine harvest from the debate.

Before I conclude, allow me to pay special tribute to the Department of Political Affairs, with which we have always worked in seeking to strengthen cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations. In so doing, I wish to pay public tribute to Mr. Ibrahima Fall. His decisive work has done much to establish a fluid, effective relationship between the United Nations and the OAU. Thanks to his forward-looking vision and because of his almost militant attitude to all African questions, Mr. Fall has helped the OAU to make progress on several African problems, particularly in the areas of conflict prevention and the conclusion of peace agreements. I wanted to make this public tribute to Mr. Fall, because of his modesty and his great talent, on behalf of the Secretary-General of the OAU, and on behalf of all my associates in the OAU office to the United Nations, with whom Mr. Fall has played the role of leader and big brother in the great African tradition. At a time when he is preparing to leave New York to take up another post in Dakar, I am sure that Mr. Fall will continue, together with us, to involve himself in our great common task in the service of Africa.

The President: I now give the floor to the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Ibrahima Fall.

Mr. Fall (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, may I first of all congratulate your country on the dynamism and the spirit of innovation with which it has contributed to the work of the Security Council in the year and a half that your country has served on the Council. The team of Singapore, under the leadership of Ambassador Mahbubani, has made a remarkable contribution, first of all to greater openness and interactive exchange in the work of the Security Council, but also to promoting targeted Security Council sanctions aimed at minimizing the impact on civilian populations. The organization of these consultations in May, which is an auspicious month for Africa because it marks the birth of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), is another contribution to this effort that has been developed over the past year and a half.

I would also like to pay a well-deserved tribute to the Permanent Representative of Mauritius, Ambassador Koonjul, the Chairman of the ad hoc Working Group on Africa, for having proposed during his presidency of the Council the establishment of such an ad hoc group, which was really a missing link in the work of the Security Council, and for having since then devoted much time and effort to making this Working Group operational. The statement that he has just made, which has painted a picture of the mission as well as the objectives and achievements of the Working Group that he presides over, demonstrates his commitment.

In an international environment of great pessimism, we might tend to underestimate the work of the United Nations in general and that of the Security Council, in particular regarding the positive contributions being made to solve conflicts in Africa. Since I have had the privilege both of overseeing the Secretariat services relating to the Security Council and also of being directly responsible for African questions within the Secretariat, I must say that that kind of an assessment is not only superficial but unjust. Indeed, the Council has devoted time, effort and considerable

resources over the past five years in order to gain a closer understanding of African realities, their nuances and their complexities, and, above all, to try to make a contribution to lasting solutions.

In that regard, the Council's visit three years in a row, precisely in the month of May, to the Great Lakes region to examine more closely the crisis in the region and try to move the various peace processes forward regarding the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi and other countries is an illustration of this, as is the visit organized by the Council recently to Ethiopia and Eritrea, again to move the peace process forward.

Lastly, I cannot fail to mention the different meetings that have been devoted to African questions, including issues not initially considered to be questions of peace and security, such as AIDS, but that, because of the magnitude of the pandemics, have a negative impact on peace and security in Africa.

The members of the Security Council therefore deserve to be commended for the work that has been accomplished. I am also delighted at the fact that during this period the Security Council has dedicated itself to strengthening bilateral cooperation between the United Nations and African organizations, be they pan-African in nature, such as the OAU, or subregional organizations. In that respect, the contacts that you have had with the different players involved in the peace agreements — such as the Lusaka Agreement in respect of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Arusha Agreement in respect of Burundi, or the Algiers Agreement in connection with the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea — all illustrate fairly well the will of the Security Council to be involved in a positive way in conflict settlement, but also in conflict prevention.

Naturally these consultations between the Security Council and African organizations have not always led to agreement between the Security Council and the different African organizations. But the Council has displayed greater resolve to be involved in conflict prevention and settlement, and also in peacekeeping operations, as is shown by the fact that today the largest peacekeeping operation in the world is in Africa, in Sierra Leone to be more exact.

The programme of work of the ad hoc Working Group presided over by Ambassador Koonjul reflects precisely the priorities and approach of the Secretariat regarding cooperation between the United Nations and African organizations. The Secretary-General, acting on the basis of the report that he submitted on the causes of conflict and the promotion of sustainable peace and development, has devoted himself during the past five years to considerably strengthening cooperation with the Organization of African Unity. Recently, he held particularly important discussions with the objective of seeing all the recommendations that were made in that report truly implemented.

The meeting today is multifaceted. I would therefore like to briefly say a few words about some of its various aspects. As for cooperation with regional organizations and consultations with regional and subregional organizations — which the ad hoc Working Group is counting on — I must say that this has become current practice at the level of the Secretariat between the United Nations and the OAU and also between the United Nations and African subregional organizations. Not only does the Secretary-General have periodic consultations twice a year during the General Assembly here in New York and at the OAU Summit elsewhere with the Secretary-General of the OAU, but in addition the two secretariats for some years now have been establishing a framework for cooperation, accompanied by a biennial programme of work, which is implemented both by the Secretariat and the agencies of the United Nations that are in Addis Ababa. That programme of work is evaluated every two years and has constant follow-up within the Secretariat.

Along the same lines, several subregional organizations have also developed relationships with the Secretariat. These include ECOWAS, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and other international organizations. Just recently, we held consultations with the OAU on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and on the Central African Republic in the light of the conclusions of the Khartoum meeting held by the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CENSAD), as well as on Madagascar; the two secretariats sent a joint mission to Madagascar and participated in the Dakar negotiations and placed them under their auspices. There have also been talks on Burundi and other matters. Only yesterday, in fact, we were talking with the OAU about the timeliness of having the OAU Central Organ devote its attention to Madagascar.

The same could be said for IGAD on Somalia, and for the Southern African Development Community (SADC) on Madagascar and other countries of the subregion, including the Comoros.

The second point for today's meeting relates to subregional consultations. The Council has already had a wide range of consultations with ECOWAS about the implementation of the Lomé agreement on Sierra Leone. In that framework, I would like to make the following suggestions.

I would like to propose the rationalization of the system of international exchanges between the Security Council and the Central Organ of the OAU for periodic discussion of questions on the agenda of the two organizations that could have an impact on peace and security in Africa. This would be in addition to the decision taken by the ad hoc Working Group to hold consultations on a regular basis with Ambassador Kébé in his capacity as permanent Observer of the OAU here in New York.

I would also suggest that such consultations be extended to all subregional African organizations. In the case of ECOWAS, that is already the case. But other organizations should also have such consultations, such as CENSAD, IGAD, the Economic Community of Central African States, SADC, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Arab Maghreb Union. Such consultations with the subregional bodies that cover all of Africa would make it possible for whatever conclusions are drawn from discussions with the OAU Central Organ to become operational and to be adapted to the subregional context. They would also make it possible to reduce the risk of either divergence or contradiction between the positions of the Security Council and those of African subregional bodies.

It is no secret that when it comes to political governance, the OAU has for several years been determined to take vigorous measures to exclude anyone who has taken power by force from its organs and deliberations. It may be desirable, in this regard, that the Security Council examine ways and means of better adapting the positions of the United Nations to that fundamental principle of the OAU. It is hard to understand that heads of Government who came to power through a coup d'état, who cannot participate in OAU deliberations, should be allowed to participate in such discussions in the United Nations.

In the same context, and still with a view to greater symbiosis between OAU and United Nations positions, the OAU decision to exclude anyone who takes power by force should be examined by the Security Council to see to what extent this principle could be applied not only to African States Members of the United Nations, but also to those from other regions. In this way, the condemnation of coups d'état would not be selectively addressed to African countries.

In order to be productive in terms of follow-up of the situations in African countries, it is desirable that such consultations should take place with the participation of Africa's development partners. It is obvious, for example, that consultations with the many African countries afflicted with problems of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration as they emerge from conflicts should also include development partners, such as the Bretton Woods institutions. In that regard, cooperation with the Economic and Social Council should also be central.

Finally, the Council has evolved a great deal with regard to sanctions, particularly regarding Africa. Nonetheless, we must note that, with Libya, Sudan, Liberia, Somalia and Angola with respect to UNITA, Africa is undeniably the continent most affected by Security Council sanctions. The measures taken to adjust these sanctions and the discussions that have taken place to find some exit strategy for sanctions have contributed a great deal to adapting the sanctions and to making them much more appropriate to their objective. But the time may have come for a much more thorough and certainly much more critical consideration by the Council of the extent to which an exit strategy for sanctions could be far better targeted.

I would like to take up another question which is also on the agenda for today's discussion: the problems of small arms and light weapons and of the illegal exploitation of natural resources. These are questions to which the Council has certainly devoted a great deal of attention over the past years. The Council has managed to find ways and means to improve the implementation of its decisions in this regard. Nonetheless, it remains a fact that in this field there is a missing link: the fact that the recommendations, resolutions and declarations of the Council are not sufficiently implemented. Above all, there is a lack of effective coordination between the work of the Council and the work of African organizations.

To give just one example, Africa has already adopted, in South Africa, a strategy on small arms and light weapons, implemented specifically in West Africa following the adoption of the ECOWAS moratorium on small arms. It must be noted that while the Council has adopted effective measures in order to better contribute to the implementation of the ECOWAS moratorium on small arms, further efforts must be undertaken to address the network of light-weapons sales in Africa; these should not be confined to those who use weapons for commercial or military purposes in Africa. Work must be done to identify the countries that produce weapons and the companies that sell those weapons in Africa. Also, measures must be taken to compel them to respect the arms moratorium and to respect Council resolutions.

In that regard, the Council could ask the ad hoc Working Group, for example, to examine the feasibility of applying the recommendations of various United Nations expert panels on Angola, Liberia and Sierra Leone to this arms trafficking problem. The Council could also mandate its President to be in contact with the Permanent Representatives of the States that harbour illicit traffic or those in which those weapons are produced, in order to ask them to make a positive contribution to the Council's commitment to the struggle against arms trafficking. The Council could also strengthen its own operational cooperation with the agencies whose work concerns illicit trafficking.

I have mentioned a few ideas that I wished to contribute to today's debate. They are not, strictly speaking, views sanctioned by the Secretariat. I wanted to take advantage of the open nature of this debate to express myself informally, freely and candidly in order to make a contribution to the debate.

I should like to conclude by saying how moved I was by the kind words of the Chairman of the ad hoc Working Group and of the Permanent Observer of the OAU to the United Nations. I thank them, and I thank you, Mr. President, for your patience.

The President: I thank the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Ibrahima Fall, for his kind words addressed to my delegation.

I should like to announce that I will be happy to give the floor to Council members who wish to respond to comments made by non-members in the course of the debate. I believe that that will make the debate both more interactive and more interesting; indeed, it was the wish of the African Group to hear the responses of Council members. Therefore, after three or four non-members have spoken, I shall be happy to give the floor to any member who wishes to respond. For example, the representative of France would like to respond after the first four speakers have spoken. I hope other Council members who wish to respond from time to time will inform the Secretariat of the point at which they wish to intervene.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Benin, who will speak as Chairman of the African Group for the month of May. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Adechi (Benin) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the African Group, I should like to thank you, Mr. President, for having taken the initiative of organizing this second public debate relating to the Security Council's ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa and for having invited non-members of the Council to participate. The African Group is particularly happy to see you presiding over the Council's work. Your presence illustrates once again your country's commitment to peace, security and development in Africa.

We also welcome the presence of Mr. Ibrahima Fall, who will soon assume his duties as Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the United Nations Office in West Africa, in Dakar.

Having placed Africa at the heart of its millennium concerns, the United Nations rightly sought to focus the international community's attention on that continent, which, despite the commendable efforts and the numerous reforms it has undertaken over approximately the past 10 years, has had a hard time finding its way on the path of development. Among the reasons that explain that situation is the persistence of wars and conflicts. The establishment of peace, security and stability is, therefore, a prerequisite for the economic development of the African continent.

We welcome the Council's opportune initiative to establish an ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa. In that initiative, the African Group would like to see a sign of the Council's real and lasting commitment to put an end to the cycle of violence in Africa and to accord equal treatment to all humanitarian crises without exception.

The United Nations has placed the individual at the centre of its concerns and considers the individual as the ultimate purpose of its work. Since the Council devotes more than 60 per cent of its deliberations to Africa, the Working Group's mandate should contribute to ensuring that the peace dividend for the benefit of African people reflects that same proportion. Our support for the ad hoc Working Group's programme of work is therefore commensurate with the added value generated in the Council's real commitment to Africa. Our support, therefore, will be constant as long as the ad hoc Working Group helps to strengthen the link and the cohesion between the volume of activities that the Council devotes to Africa and the effective implementation of its decisions.

Upon analysis, the African Group believes that the programme of work presented to us falls within collective efforts to examine and address comprehensively the question of conflict prevention and resolution. We therefore support the programme of work. We also support the strengthening of interaction between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council in order to consolidate peace through development. Therefore, the Security Council needs to better coordinate its African activities with those of the Economic and Social Council in order to mobilize international political support for peace-building in Africa.

Mindful of the fact that it has the primary responsibility for conflict prevention and settlement in Africa, and in its desire to facilitate the resolution of such conflicts, our continental organization — the Organization of African Unity (OAU) — has sought to redynamize its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. The OAU needs its implementation of the outcome of this restructuring to be accompanied by the establishment of closer and better coordinated cooperation and by the contribution of the Working Group, so that the Council can be better aware of how Africa has evaluated conflict situations.

Accordingly, we very much hope that the Working Group will develop close and regular cooperation with the Ad Hoc Advisory Group of the Economic and Social Council on African Countries Emerging from Conflict in order to make the peace dividend tangible for Africans and to ensure that the economic situation of those countries will not pose a threat to peace or exacerbate and ultimately destabilize security conditions.

The nature of the Security Council's involvement in Africa is becoming complex. It is no longer confined to classic peacekeeping because the character and consequences of conflicts have prompted the Council to integrate civilian and police components into its operations. With the break-up of institutions, we are seeing the emergence of non-State actors. As a result, civilians, and sometimes even United Nations personnel, are used as shields and bargaining chips. We believe that the ad hoc Working Group, because of its informal nature and flexible functioning, could help bring about innovation, adaptability to unusual situations or experiment with exploratory measures in the new type of intervention undertaken by the Council. Generally speaking, the Working Group could focus greater attention on prevention in its programme of work. The Council, in its formal mode, has been rather reactive in this respect.

With respect to conflict prevention, the Working Group could in particular discuss the following points.

On the issue of institutional dialogue, it should rely greater on operational early warning and preventive diplomacy mechanisms of the Organization of African Unity and regional African organizations. This practice would help perpetuate such dialogue and strengthen the synergy between the Council, representatives of the Secretary-General in the field and African organizations concerned. Ultimately, we might contemplate an identical assessment or, at the very least, a close reading of crisis situations by the aforementioned stakeholders. In all cases, better account could be taken of what precisely is at stake, providing better opportunities to reduce tensions and earning greater credibility for the Council.

As to election monitoring, the relevance of the type of intervention we have seen to our objectives needs to be redefined. In Africa today, voters, through their political parties and civil society organizations and thanks to new communications technologies — particularly the mobile phone and rural radio stations — are largely able to observe elections and to assess their legitimacy. Furthermore, and thanks to African non-governmental organizations, the practice of using observers from other regions of Africa has gained considerable ground.

On the other hand, the weak link in the chain of the electoral process is and will remain the establishment of reliable and permanent electoral roles.

Permanence in this context means a simple updating rather than a complete recreation of such lists, in which there is a possibility of manipulation every time an election is held. Therein lie the sources of contested elections that can lead to conflicts.

Reliable electoral roles require proper census-taking, reliable and operational information about civil status, credible inscription measures for electoral roles and, finally, an independent election monitoring structure. That is what is at stake, requiring considerable financial and logistical resources and thus increased and commensurate logistical and financial capacity. The Working Group might also take up this issue.

I take this opportunity to indicate that Benin, currently chairing the follow-up committee on the Fourth International Conference of the New or Restored Democracies, plans to convene an African workshop or colloquium to consider this issue and to draw up an inventory of best practices and successful experience on this subject. Through you, Sir, I urge all people of good will to assist Benin in convening that meeting.

With respect to conflict settlement, and in particular the practice of establishing so-called groups of friends, I would note that, from Africa's point of view, we observe that only external friends are summoned, while no account is taken of the many internal friends — indigenous peoples who have no choice but to love their country.

My point is that the Working Group should consider ways to enable existing traditional mechanisms, specific to each country, to help prevent conflicts or their re-emergence. This could include recourse to groups of elders, traditional or religious leaders and women's movements. Such a commitment from civil society in its broadest embodiment could help to mobilize national or subregional energies to promote peace and to re-establish trust and a sense of belonging.

We are happy to note that the Security Council is taking small steps in that direction. The dialogue held a few weeks ago between the civil society of Kisangani, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Security Council delegation was an encouraging illustration of this. I would therefore encourage the Council to commit itself resolutely to that approach.

I cannot conclude without commending the engagement and perseverance of Ambassador Koonjul of Mauritius, who has given body and soul to the Working Group. I also wish to express our gratitude to the other members of the Council for their ongoing support for this project, a timely response to the concerns of Africa in the prevention and resolution of conflicts.

The President: I thank the representative of Benin for his kind words addressed to my delegation.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Egypt. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like at the outset to extend to you, Sir, our thanks and appreciation for convening and presiding over this important meeting, which comes at a time that is witnessing a number of developments on the African scene — some positive and others discouraging — and thus requires an assessment of the expected role of this Council vis-à-vis Africa and an assessment of that role against the efforts currently being made to resolve the continent's conflicts and to assist it in overcoming the difficulties and obstacles it faces.

I would like in this context to express in particular our appreciation for the initiative of the Permanent Representative of Mauritius, Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul, that led to the establishment of the Security Council's ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa and the elaboration of its terms of reference and programme of work.

In light of my delegation's interest in the subject under consideration and our anticipation of a positive outcome from this meeting, allow me to address a number of specific points that we feel deserve to be highlighted.

The delegation of Egypt agrees with the broad outline contained in the terms of reference of the Working Group, including its mandate and the programme of work agreed to following its first meeting on 22 March. While it is hoped that the Group will be able to propose concrete, realistic and workable recommendations to the Security Council, the delegation of Egypt would like to stress above all a central and primary point: the need to consider the points of view to be expressed today by the non-

members of the Council — especially the African countries, which are supposedly the parties directly concerned — if we are to attain the objectives of monitoring the results of the Council's previous interests in Africa, enhancing cooperative relationships with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the subregional organizations in the continent, and developing the relationship between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council on issues related to Africa.

Secondly, I find it important to refer here to a similar open debate in the Council in January last year. That debate, like this one, was held under the presidency of Singapore. It addressed the issue of enhancing cooperation between the Security Council and countries contributing troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations. It appears to us that many of the constructive views and suggestions put forward by the troop-contributing countries at the time — which were compiled by the delegation of Singapore in a non-paper, for which we are grateful to the delegation of Singapore — were, unfortunately, not incorporated into operations on the ground nor were they reflected in the mechanism for consultation with the troop-contributing countries that was established by the Security Council at a later stage. The Council has taken it upon itself today to listen to the views of non-members and the necessary objective of this meeting should be to strengthen our conviction that our positions will be considered and that our concerns will be taken into account.

Thirdly, concerning the issue of enhancing cooperation between the Security Council on the one hand and the OAU and African subregional organizations on the other, the delegation of Egypt acknowledges that the subject has indeed recently received the increased attention it deserves. Everyone now recognizes that the Council cannot act on its own or in isolation from the political and security arrangements already in place in the continent.

We should like to propose a number of specific methods for enhancing this relationship. For example, an institutionalized channel for consultation and the exchange of information could be established between the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism on Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution and the Security Council's ad hoc Working Group that would allow the Council to be accurately apprised of the positions taken by the OAU on the issues under consideration. The Permanent Observer of the OAU in New York and the Permanent Representative of the country chairing the Central Organ could serve as the contact points so as to enable the Working Group to listen to Africa's common voice on African issues under consideration by the Council. We would also suggest considering convening regular meetings, perhaps once every year, between the Security Council and the Central Organ, similar to those that the Council has become accustomed to holding during the last two years with the members of the Political Committee of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Finally, the delegation of Egypt has previously suggested that the Council seek to involve a representative of the secretariat of the OAU in the missions dispatched by the Council to various regions, such as those that visited the Great Lakes region, Sierra Leone and Ethiopia-Eritrea. Here, as a first step, the Council could demonstrate its interest in responding to this suggestion by involving a representative of the OAU secretariat in the working mission that it agreed to send to Somalia in accordance with the presidential statement it adopted on 28 March.

Fourthiy, we hope that these suggestions will be translated into specific actions to strengthen the relationship between the Council and the African continent and subregional organizations. It is most important, therefore, that the Council pay due attention not only to ascertaining the common positions of Africa but also to responding to African requests as far as possible before proceeding to take any decision or action regarding the maintenance of peace and security in the continent. In the past, we have seen a number of cases in which the Council — or more specifically, some of its more influential members — has taken a path contrary to the one proposed by the OAU or by the subregional organization directly concerned with the issue. In the past, for example, the Economic Community of West African States adopted a position during the outbreak of the crisis in Sierra Leone in May 2000 but that position received no response. The States of West Africa had previously taken a common position on how to address the situation in Liberia; that situation was not addressed. More recently, the Community of Sahelan Saharan States — on whose behalf the Ambassador of Libya will speak later — adopted tangible initiatives to prevent the situation in the Central African Republic from escalating. Not only

did the Council fail to respond to those initiatives but some of its major members worked to hinder and abort them. What is needed here is for the Security Council to appreciate that Africa and its organizations have their positions and interests with respect to the maintenance of peace and the resolution of conflicts in the continent.

Fifthly, while we consistently reaffirm the need to respect the competencies and jurisdictions of the other primary organs of the United Nations, there are a number of other ideas contained in the programme of work of the ad hoc Working Group for which the delegation of Egypt would like to express its support. Among those ideas is enhancing coordination with the Economic and Social Council. That can be accomplished, in particular, by holding institutionalized consultations with the ad hoc advisory group that is currently being established for African countries emerging from conflict, as well as by tasking the chairman of the Security Council's ad hoc Working Group with holding regular consultations with the President of the Economic and Social Council on actions needed with respect to specific African countries in order to prevent the eruption of conflicts or to prevent their resumption during the post-conflict peace-building phase.

We would like to stress the primary role that the General Assembly must play in election monitoring by, inter alia, supervising the activities of the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs. If the Security Council were to play a role in election monitoring, we would suggest that such a role be confined solely to the Council's announcing its political support for the conclusions of United Nations election observers and their requesting all national parties concerned to respect the recommendations of observer missions.

Finally, the meeting today will undoubtedly result in the presentation of innovative ideas and varied suggestions on how to enhance the role expected of the Security Council with regard to Africa. Once again I feel obliged to express our appreciation for the increased political will that the Council has been displaying to shoulder its responsibilities towards the continent, as it has done with regard to Sierra Leone and Angola and as it is doing now with regard to the Great Lakes region and Ethiopia and Eritrea. I should also stress that the most valuable contribution that the ad hoc Working Group can make is to review all the resolutions, statements and declarations adopted by the Council, starting perhaps with the resolutions on Somalia adopted since 1991, moving on to those adopted pursuant to the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict in Africa and ending with the presidential statement of 31 January. The Working Group could then assess which pledges the Council has kept — and they are many — and which promises did not materialize — which are also many. The investigation that the Council requested into violations of the sanctions imposed on the rebels in Sierra Leone and Angola and into the plundering of the resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has led to the naming and shaming of those parties and entities involved in violating those sanctions. The Working Group's review of the Council's pledges will, perhaps, increase the Council's own enthusiasm to redouble its efforts to implement what it has promised and to follow-up on what it has previously pledged with regard to Africa.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Algeria. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): The Algerian delegation is delighted to see a man of your stature and experience presiding over the Council, particularly at a time when it is discussing ways and means of preventing and resolving the conflicts that continue to beset Africa.

In this connection, my delegation wishes to express its full gratitude and consideration to Ambassador Koonjul, Permanent Representative of Mauritius, for having initiated this debate on African conflicts and for his enlightened chairmanship of the working group on this subject.

Before contributing to the important debate begun this morning, and which, we are convinced, will be concluded successfully, my delegation wishes to pay a heartfelt tribute to Ambassador Sergey Lavrov, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, for the remarkable way he conducted the work of the Security Council during a month in which international upheaval required the constant attention of the Council.

It is a fact that for a year now Africa has been showing a more serene face, bloody internal or trans-border conflicts having become less common or having diminished considerably in their intensity. It has been a long time since Africa reproached the Council for not

showing enough determination in resolving African problems. However, it is important to remain cautious and to work resolutely to attack the real causes of conflicts, which steep their roots in the extreme poverty still being fought in the continent.

The relative abatement of conflicts is unquestionably the fruit of collective awareness at the African and international levels of the tragic problems faced by the continent and the results of joint efforts of the Africans themselves and the international community for peace and security in the continent, a condition that is crucial to efforts to curb its economic problems and to achieve sustainable development.

Since the beginning of the past decade, Africa has been aware of the burden placed by conflicts of different types and origin on its economic expansion and the living conditions of its peoples. This early diagnosis led the Organization of African Unity, meeting at the summit level in 1993, to establish a central organ for conflict prevention, management and resolution, which has made a great contribution to promoting and spreading the culture of peace that Africans naturally cherish.

Since then the multitude of efforts on the part of African leaders and their active commitment to preventing and settling conflicts has attested in many cases to the irreversible nature of this awareness. In parallel, this effort has enjoyed the international community's support, which has been expressed in two ways; first, through the active support for efforts aimed at mediation, conciliation and good offices conducted by eminent African leaders, illustrated in particular by the support given by the Organization and member States to the mediation by my country in seeking to resolve the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea; and secondly, by the interest and the equal and unequivocal attention paid to the affairs of the African continent by the main bodies of the Organization — the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Secretary-General and the Economic and Social Council — which have helped to strengthen the analysis of the causes of conflicts and the economic backwardness of Africa, thus giving African leaders decisive encouragement to put the continent on the sure path of peace, security and sustainable development, on which they had embarked with conviction of their own initiative.

Since the endorsement by the OAU Summit, held at Algiers in 1999, of the principle of democratic change through constitutional means, up to the adoption by the Lusaka Summit in July 2001 of the truly African initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), Africa has been in full agreement with the international community regarding measures to be taken at the political and economic levels.

Africa has adopted an integrated approach, which establishes the interrelationship between questions of democratization and political participation, respect for universal norms on human rights, good management of public affairs and healthy economic policies on how to deal with the underlying, structural causes of conflicts and the obstacles to sustainable development at the economic, social and human levels.

Now we need to see how the international community intends to buttress this approach. I am grateful to members of the Security Council collectively for having established this ad hoc Working Group on conflict prevention and resolution in Africa, about which I would like to make some comments.

Regarding the role of the Economic and Social Council, it is worth recalling that under the prerogatives conferred by the Charter, much of its action on the causes of conflict in Africa fall to the Economic and Social Council. It is therefore natural that the Security Council act closely with the Economic and Social Council, pursuant to Article 65 of the Charter, to implement central integrated strategies for conflict prevention or post-conflict peace-building after conflicts have ended. We welcome the fact that the President of the Economic and Social Council participated in the public meeting of the Security Council on the situation in Africa on 29 January 2002 and that he is taking an active part today in the Council meeting.

A stronger relationship, including joint meetings, as has been mentioned before, would allow these two bodies to better coordinate their actions and to avoid unnecessary overlap or conflict of competence.

In the matter of prevention and early warning, the Economic and Social Council has an unequal body of information regarding the underlying causes of conflicts in Africa and elsewhere, accumulated through its funds and programmes, as well as because of its close involvement in these questions, which make it a vigilant observer of the structural causes that could degenerate into violent conflict.

With regard to NEPAD, the ad hoc Working Group of the Security Council definitely has a role to play in implementing the goals of the Partnership.

Despite the Security Council's primary role in aspects of conflict settlement and peacekeeping, it is called on, through its ad hoc Working Group, to give valuable assistance to the Economic and Social Council to contribute to political mobilization at a high political level at a time when it is preparing to receive a mandate from Member States to translate the support of the United Nations into specific projects. This will take place against the background of a high-level debate on Africa, to be held by the General Assembly on 16 September 2002, and of the final review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa, which will take place a few days before that date.

The ad hoc Working Group could become actively involved, particularly in the United Nations Development Group and the Office of Executive Directors in preparing these crucial events to mobilize enough resources for Africa and help the Security Council accept the validity of the preventive approach at this time of scant resources and dwindling official development assistance. These resources are far below the resources given to peacekeeping operations, but they are so necessary for development programmes.

In this context, I wish to point out that the member countries of the NEPAD Steering Committee have undertaken to organize a preparatory meeting leading up to this high-level dialogue in the form of a seminar, to be held in New York in mid-July 2002, where the participation and contribution of the ad hoc Working Group would be highly appropriate.

With regard to peace-building, coordination with the Economic and Social Council ad hoc Group for African countries emerging from conflicts is crucial.

At the request of a country or of the countries concerned, the Economic and Social Council could, while setting up its ad hoc Group and during the Group's work, discuss with the Security Council's ad hoc Working Group the potential usefulness of extending the mandate of a peacekeeping operation or of mounting a preventive deployment operation until causes identified as inflammatory disappear. We wonder whether the Economic and Social Council should not invite the Chairman of the ad hoc Working Group of the Security Council to nominate a representative to participate in the work of their Group.

Concerning cooperation with the OAU and subregional organizations — Ambassador Kébé spoke about this very ably — the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter and those of paragraphs 16 and 25 of the OAU Summit Declaration, which in 1993 led to the establishment of the OAU Mechanism on Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, indicate that the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism is a counterpart to the ad hoc Working Group of the Security Council on conflict prevention and resolution for African conflicts. So we welcome the fact that this Central Organ has undertaken to reform its work in order to have a better handle on events.

The regular meetings of the Central Organ, which are annual meetings at the head of State level, every six months at the ministerial level and monthly at the ambassadorial level, definitely have a body of information and facts that the ad hoc Working Group could use. This, together with the Central Organ's knowledge of African realities, would make it possible for the Working Group to do the job for which it was created, particularly in the early warning area. The ad hoc Working Group could, likewise, draw on the work of the subcommittee for peace and security set up by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Steering Committee; the subcommittee consists of the heads of State of Algeria, Gabon, Mali, Mauritius and South Africa.

Turning now to the role of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in Africa, we recall here that preventive diplomacy is particularly desirable and necessary to ease tensions before they degenerate into conflict. In order to be effective, it is important, however, for there to be prior consent and active cooperation on the part of the parties concerned. In the case of early warning, the ad hoc Working Group could take joint preventive action with the Security Council and the Secretary-General by nominating or dispatching special representatives responsible for conducting or coordinating missions of enquiry or fact-finding missions.

It seems appropriate to me to recall the initiative that was taken jointly a few years by the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the OAU in appointing a Special Joint Representative for the Great Lakes region, which make it possible for both organizations to reach a better understanding of the situation in that part of Africa.

Finally, on the establishment of groups of friends for specific conflict situations, this practice may be useful for gathering information about specific situations, for coming up with appropriate solutions where members of the group are from neighbouring countries or from countries that have special interests in the State concerned, or for mediation or good offices missions between the parties to a conflict. It is important, however, to understand this practice as being one merely to assist the Security Council in its quest for a solution; that kind of group cannot take the place of the Council.

These are the comments that I wanted to share with the Council at this stage. I hope that the Council and the Working Group will find the comments useful.

The President: I shall now call on the representative of the Republic of Korea, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Lee Ho-jin (Republic of Korea): I would like to express my delegation's appreciation to you, Sir, for chairing this open debate in the Security Council. Let me also thank the Singapore presidency for taking up the issue of the ad-hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa as a follow-up to last January's discussion under the Mauritius presidency.

Africa has been the focus of discussions within the United Nations system over past decades, as the frequent outbreaks of armed conflicts and persistent underdevelopment in that part of the world have called for the involvement of the United Nations. The Security Council, with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security under the United Nations Charter, has played a leading part in securing peace and in preventing conflicts in Africa. We have witnessed remarkable, if not complete, progress towards peace in such countries as Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Ethiopia and Eritrea, to name a few, which was possible only with the extensive engagement of the Security Council.

Other principal organs of the United Nations have also been active in addressing a number of issues in Africa. The General Assembly has made valuable contributions in this regard by taking various measures, including the relevant recommendations of its Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa, and its facilitating role in addressing the "conflict diamonds" question. The Economic and Social Council, in particular, has a critical role to play in Africa. The adoption of comprehensive proposals for sustainable development in Africa at the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council substantive session last July is just one of many recent examples. The Republic of Korea, by and large, supports the work programme of the ad hoc Working Group on conflict prevention and resolution in Africa, as presented by its Chairman, Ambassador Koonjul.

My delegation would like to focus on the Council's relations with the Economic and Social Council and its cooperation with African regional organizations.

First, with regard to the relations between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council in the context of preventing and resolving conflicts in Africa, the consensus is that an inextricable linkage exists between durable peace and sustainable development, particularly in the African region. The need to tackle the root causes of conflict has been confirmed, inter alia, by Security Council resolution 1366 (2001) of August 2001 and the ECOSOC Ministerial Declaration of July 2001. We believe that without reversing the adverse economic and social conditions in African countries, such as the high proportion of people living in extreme poverty and the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, efforts aimed at conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building in Africa will be neither effective nor sustainable.

In this context, we welcome the inclusion of relations between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council as one of the most important issues before the ad hoc Working Group. My delegation also commends the President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Ivan Šimonović of Croatia, for having made a priority the strengthening of the relationship between these two bodies during his presidency this year. My delegation believes that it might be useful for the Security Council Working Group and the Economic and Social Council's ad-hoc Advisory Group to regularize inter-group consultations and report their findings to both the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council for further deliberation.

Secondly, I would like to share some observations on relations between the Security Council and African regional organizations, in particular the Organization of African Unity (OAU). It should be noted in this context that the responsibility for creating domestic conditions for peace and development rests primarily with the countries themselves. But at the same time we recognize that the inflow of broader international assistance, such as the placement of United Nations peacekeeping operations and various forms of economic aid, including official development assistance, remains indispensable.

In that regard, my delegation welcomes locally tailored initiatives on Africa such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). We greatly admire the guiding role of the OAU in launching that truly fitting programme. My delegation also recognizes the importance of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on NEPAD to be held this coming September, which will highlight the role of the United Nations in assisting the implementation of NEPAD.

We understand that both the Security Council and the General Assembly support closer ties between the United Nations and the OAU, and a stronger role for the OAU in the field of regional peace and security. My delegation believes that strengthened participation by OAU representatives in the Security Council discussions on African issues, where practicable, could lead to a better understanding of regional situations. Building on the achievement of initiating NEPAD in the social and economic field, African countries could, in the longer term, consider devising a sort of regional conflict-prevention mechanism to monitor the regional security situation, issue early warnings and act as a liaison with United Nations peacekeeping operations.

In closing, my delegation hopes that the Security Council ad hoc Working Group will produce meaningful results and thus contribute to the work of the Council on many African issues.

The President: As I indicated earlier that I would, I shall now give the floor to a member of the Council to respond to some of the comments made in this debate so far, in line with the wish of the African Group to make the debate more interactive.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): We thank you, Sir, for personally presiding over this extremely important Security Council meeting. We also thank Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul for having been at the starting point of our debate by creating the ad hoc Working Group, which he is leading with all of his talent.

As you have invited us to do, Sir, I shall try to respond to some of the comments made by the preceding speakers. Basically, I shall endeavour, on behalf of France, to address the most delicate subjects that have been raised. Indeed, that is how our discussion can be of greatest interest.

My first observation is that more and more African leaders are themselves taking charge of the search for solutions to African crises. This is an extremely positive development, which we must welcome. To cite a few examples, as Ambassador Baali reminded us, Algeria has played a decisive role in the search for a solution to the border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The countries of the Great Lakes region, through the Lusaka Agreement, have charted the course towards a solution to the crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), for their part, have long sought a solution to the crisis in Sierra Leone. Therefore, the role of the Security Council is increasingly to accompany the African countries themselves in implementing the solutions that they themselves develop. This is a very positive point.

Nonetheless, it is a point that I believe requires careful consideration as to the modalities of such cooperation. I believe that the Security Council cannot only be a provider of services that would respond, toeing the line, to orders from African heads of State, who in a way would unilaterally set the rules of the game. A true partnership is necessary from the very start, in other words from the time that agreements are negotiated, at least if African leaders want to entrust all or part of the implementation of their plans to the Security Council.

To cite an example, we have just conducted our third mission to the Great Lakes region. The Lusaka Agreement, as written, calls upon the Security Council forcibly to disarm the ex-FAR and Interahamwe groups. We received the Agreement; we read it; and we immediately said: mission impossible. Furthermore, how could United Nations Blue Helmets succeed in doing what the Rwandan army has not managed to do on the soil of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in

the past three years? Thus, afterwards, we had lengthy discussions with our Lusaka Agreement partners to say yes, of course, to disarmament and repatriation of ex-FAR and Interahamwe, but on a voluntary rather than a forced, imposed basis.

I cite that example to show how desirable it is for the African leaders, when they commit themselves to conflict resolution and wish to give responsibilities to the Security Council, to involve the Council in advance, when they see fit to do so, and, before adopting a plan, to make sure that what they are asking of the United Nations and the Security Council is something that the Council can indeed do.

My second comment is that some speakers expressed regret that agreements between the regional or subregional organizations and the Security Council are not always perfect from the outset. The representative of Egypt gave the example of ECOWAS and of Sierra Leone. I personally believe that it is quite normal for us to have views that sometimes differ, simply because the leaders of the region are in direct contact with the realities, and are sometimes very closely related to some of those involved in a conflict. For our part, we look at the situation from outside, and we send often large numbers of troops — 17,000, for example, to Sierra Leone. So it is normal for us to have this discussion. But what I would like to emphasize to those who are listening to us is to what extent this discussion throughout the successful management of the Sierra Leone crisis was, in the end, extremely productive. We started from quite different perspectives, and little by little we managed, here too, to build a partnership, which has enabled us, I believe I can say, to succeed together. The elections that have just taken place in Sierra Leone bear eloquent witness to this.

The third comment is on a delicate question, that of sanctions, which Ibrahima Fall referred to. What strikes me is that, basically the African leaders are increasingly asking us to adopt sanctions against some of their own who are not complying with commitments that they themselves have undertaken.

We saw this in our recent mission to the Great Lakes region, where we had an extremely interesting debate between the 15 members of the Security Council and all the Foreign Ministers and Defence Ministers of the signatories of the Lusaka Agreement. They unanimously asked us to adopt sanctions against those of their own who were not keeping their commitments. In particular, they asked us to withdraw troops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Sir Jeremy Greenstock, who is right here, told them: "Well, we are not very fond of adopting sanctions", to which the other side replied: "Yes, but we are asking you to adopt these sanctions." The final communiqué, which I invite you to read, exactly reflects that debate.

The comment I would like to share with you this morning is that here again what we need to develop is a real partnership. When the African leaders ask us to adopt sanctions, I think they must know that if we do that it is first of all up to them, the regional countries, to see to it that the sanctions are properly implemented. We have been able to verify the extent to which sanctions can succeed. The most recent case is that of Angola, where without question the sanctions adopted by the Security Council played an important, perhaps even decisive, role. This is simply because all of the countries of the region played the game perfectly and cooperated with the Council.

So, if we adopt sanctions upon the request of the signatories of the Lusaka Agreement, those sanctions could succeed only if all the countries of the region participated in their implementation. This applies to Burundi as well, where we have been having a dialogue — which is to continue in the coming week — concerning the rebel groups that refuse to end the fighting and join the peace process.

These initial comments relate to conflict management once conflicts erupt. We all agree that it is better to prevent than to correct, and all the speakers have emphasized the extent to which prevention is necessary. This is often a very difficult subject, because most African crises are in fact internal crises. Here, we come up against Article 2, paragraph 7 of the Charter if we give it a close reading.

At what point should we move past the question of non-interference in internal affairs in order to embark on the prevention of a crisis that we all see coming? Here again, I believe that the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the subregional organizations can point the way.

I find it striking to observe, for example in the crisis in Madagascar that was raised by Ibrahima Fall and mentioned by others as well, how the OAU, when confronted by a grave crisis, albeit an internal one, unhesitatingly committed itself to making a full

contribution to the quest for a peaceful solution. I believe that our Council, which hesitates to follow the OAU, should not have this hesitation. When the OAU believes that it should play its role because the very future of a country is at stake, the Council should be prepared to work side by side with the OAU in its initiative, as long as the OAU wishes that.

There is a last point that I would like to raise, a follow-up to the preceding point, and that is the electoral processes. Unfortunately, it is often electoral processes which lead to crises. That is just the case in Madagascar, but there are other recent examples that could be mentioned in that region of Africa which can plunge us into situations that are then difficult to manage.

Here I believe that the Security Council does not have a direct role. But since we are all in this brainstorming sort of meeting, I believe it would be good for us to reflect together on certain rules of the game that might be accepted by all. What I mean is that the United Nations Secretariat, which has long experience in this area and which has established very clear rules of the game, should work with the OAU so that when a country requests that an electoral process be observed, there would be some sort of United Nations-OAU partnership to observe it.

When we say "observe", that does not mean being present just on election day. It means being present, as the United Nations requests, during the preceding months so that the preparations for the elections can be blameless. It means being present during the elections themselves, and when the results are announced it would be appropriate that a single spokesperson represent the United Nations and the OAU, to avoid the cacophony of often diverging announcements.

The Security Council does not need to intervene directly on this subject, but since it has been raised, I think the Council, which on occasion deals with the grave consequences of difficult elections, can make recommendations about possible courses of action. I think this is an additional reason for cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations.

These are the few comments that I wish to make on behalf of France on the subjects that seem to me to be the most delicate among all of those raised by the preceding speakers in this extremely rich and positive discussion.

The President: I now call on the representative of Bangladesh, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): Mr. President, we owe you a debt of gratitude for providing us this opportunity to share our views with you on the work of the ad hoc Working Group chaired by Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul.

We have studied with interest the extensive mandate given to him and his group. We are encouraged by the progress made by the group to date. We listened with great attention to Ambassador Koonjul, and we thank him for his exhaustive report. The Working Group and its very able Chairman deserve our high appreciation.

Mr. Foreign Minister, your return to the Council within a few months to revisit the conflicts in Africa demonstrates your commitment to bringing about a difference in the lives across that embattled continent — a difference, as against indifference; an impetus for action, as against inaction; a fresh look at the state of affairs, as against a routine sense of resolutions and statements. This is in consonance with the kind of vibrant leadership that Singapore and Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani have been providing this Council this month.

We are particularly pleased that the dialogue has included Ambassador Ivan Šimonović, President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), a sister body that shares so many of the tasks of the Security Council in conflict prevention, if not resolution. We also welcome the participation of Ambassador Amadou Kébé and Mr. Ibrahima Fall and thank them for their thought-provoking statements.

Sadly, Africa remains a conflict-ridden continent. A dozen African countries are experiencing active conflict, and many others are showing signs of instability. That reality persists despite numerous resolutions and statements, sanctions and special missions. The Council has been spending about three quarters of its time on African issues. While it has not had the kind of success for which we had hoped, a modicum of progress has been made. Peace has been restored in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone and Angola, but the quest for peace in the Great Lakes region and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi and Rwanda remains elusive.

West Africa remains fragile. There is instability in Liberia, and threats of spillover into neighbouring countries are real. Somalia has yet to find stability within and peace with its neighbours. Sudan has remained entangled in a civil war for two decades. Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic are tottering in post-conflict peace-building. Western Sahara languishes in an apparently intractable dispute. Each of these issues is dealt with as an individual item by the Council, and rightly so. All of them have unique historical legacies, dimensions and factors. All of them require specific responses, and, if the conflicts are not resolved, the Council must share a part of the responsibility.

The Working Group should not become a "back burner" for unresolved conflicts. Its existence should not mean that the Council can become complacent or that it can relinquish any of its primary responsibilities. Africa's problems are all too real. That is so evident as to require no further study or analysis.

Let me cite an example: the case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. For the past few years, the Council has, under Chapter VII, been asking foreign forces to withdraw from the country's territory. Most of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's allies have withdrawn, but at least one of its adversaries is maintaining some 40,000 troops 2,000 kilometres inside the country. Here, as in the Middle East, the Council has failed to secure compliance with its mandatory resolutions. The international community acted elsewhere to restore the sovereignty of fellow Member States subjected to military aggression. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has not been favoured with such action. The country's resources are still being plundered. The Council-mandated expert panel has reported its findings and conclusions. The nexus between conflict and plunder has been exposed and names have been named, yet the tragedy continues unabated.

I should like to make a few comments on the ad hoc Working Group's mandate. First, with regard to monitoring the implementation of Council decisions, we are of the view that the Working Group should take care to avoid duplicating the work of the Secretariat, that of the regional and subregional offices of the United Nations and that of the Special Representatives and Representatives of the Secretary-General. In our understanding, it is the Secretariat's responsibility to ensure the implementation of Council decisions. Monitoring effective follow-up is also a Secretariat competence. The Secretary-General has in place the necessary instruments — Special Representatives, Representatives and Officers — and, when necessary, sends special missions such as inter-agency teams. The reports submitted by the Secretary-General, the briefings provided by the Secretariat, the monthly working luncheons, the annual retreats and other meetings should provide the Council with the necessary information, analysis and recommendations for Council action. There is, therefore, a need for the Group to be innovative in discharging this task and to avoid duplication.

Secondly, with respect to enhancing cooperation and coordination with the Economic and Social Council, we note that the Working Group plans to meet with the Economic and Social Council bureau on that question. Before embarking on such an exercise, it would perhaps be pertinent to determine whether anything has been going wrong. One needs to find out if the Secretariat, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council have identified any lack of cooperation, unnecessary duplication, encroachment or inattention.

Thirdly, concerning the examination of regional and cross-country conflict issues, ample research and studies have already been carried out on that matter. In addition, there are the reports of the Inter-Agency Task Force. Should the Council need further input, it could consider studies published by think tanks such as the International Crisis Group (ICG), the Carnegie Foundation, the Institute for Policy Analysis (IPA) and other regional and research centres. In recent years, the Council has been engaging increasingly in interaction with think tanks, as well as with non-governmental organizations. While on the Council, Bangladesh found such encounters involving seminars, symposia and other formal meetings to be extremely useful. A seminar on a regional approach held under the Colombian presidency was also appreciated. We thought such exchanges contributed usefully to decision-making in the Council.

Fourthly, with regard to cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Secretary-General has established a forum that has proved useful, the annual high-level meeting with regional organizations. The ad hoc Working Group should take care that it does not duplicate that work. The Working Group could indeed perform a most useful role and add

value to the Council's work by acting as a conduit between it and the world beyond. It should — and we are certain that it will — spur the Council to lead rather than to react. We are confident that the prodigious qualities of Ambassador Koonjul will make that possible. It is our hope that the Group will help focus on action rather than on rhetoric, and also that it will assist in throwing a spotlight on the root causes of conflict.

In addressing Africa's conflict, we need not reinvent the wheel. Rather, we should revisit the Secretary-General's April 1998 report (S/1998/318) on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. We should take action to implement the recommendations, some of which have been also endorsed in Security Council resolutions. In a globalizing world, interdependence is no longer an abstract mantra. Asia is not that far from Africa, nor is any other continent.

In April 1998, in the report that we have just cited, the Secretary-General stated,

> "... African leaders have failed the peoples of Africa; the international community has failed them; the United Nations has failed them." (*S/1998/318, para. 5*)

Those words were more a wake-up call than an admonition. Four years have elapsed since then. Let this interactive meeting be an impetus to reversing this state of affairs.

The President: I thank the representative of Bangladesh for his kind words addressed to my delegation.

I now call on the representative of Cuba, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We feel honoured, Sir, by your presiding over this Council meeting. We welcome the meeting's format, in which Council non-members have been able to hear the valuable information presented by Ambassador Koonjul, Chairman of the Security Council ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa; by Mr. Ivan Šimonović, President of the Economic and Social Council, by Mr. Amadou Kébé, Permanent Observer of the Organization of African Unity (OAU); and by Mr. Ibrahima Fall, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to whom we bid a fond farewell.

We wonder, however, why this type of meeting is not also being extended to other groups and subsidiary bodies of the Security Council, such as the working groups examining the question of sanctions and peacekeeping operations. As we have said on earlier occasions, there is much wisdom among Africa's leaders and representatives. No one has a better understanding of African problems or is in a better position to find the most appropriate solutions than they.

For that reason, Cuba is participating in this debate with particular eagerness to hear the opinions and the proposals of the African delegations. In addition, we believe that the Council Working Group, whenever possible, should be chaired by an African representative.

The Group should have frequent and direct contact with the protagonists in conflicts and with African regional and subregional mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflicts. In spite of what has been said in debates and affirmed in resolutions, emphasis continues to be placed on reaction to conflicts rather than on prevention.

As has been said here, the best solution is prevention. Prevention means addressing the most profound causes of conflict, such as poverty and underdevelopment. However, many of the measures that are necessary to eliminate the causes of conflict in Africa and to consolidate peace and sustainable development are clearly beyond the mandate of the Security Council and correspond to other organs, such as the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Therefore, one of the functions of the Working Group should be the careful consideration of activities undertaken by the Security Council in Africa that may need to be reconsidered because the Council is not the appropriate organ to undertake them.

Our insistence on clearly delimiting the responsibilities of the Security Council is a response not to a purely conceptual concern, but rather to the fact that, when this organ assumes functions that are beyond its competence and for which it is therefore not duly prepared, the countries that are subject to such measures suffer the consequences, while functions for which the Security Council is responsible and accountable are inevitably affected.

There is sometimes a proliferation of United Nations initiatives and proposals of various types for Africa, but there is still no comprehensive and integrated approach to solving problems related to peace, security and development in the continent, nor is there any mechanism for periodic evaluations of the implementation of what has been agreed. One reason why such an approach remains elusive is the inadequate level of coordination and communication among the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. We hope that the work of the Security Council Working Group will contribute to changing that situation.

The work of the Working Group should complement and not substitute for the efforts of other organs to address African problems. It is very important that there be no duplication. We propose that periodic meetings be held involving the Chairmen of the Security Council Working Group on Africa, the Open-Ended Ad Hoc Working Group of the General Assembly on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa, and the ad hoc Advisory Group of the Economic and Social Council on African Countries Emerging from Conflict. The results of these meetings should be duly reported to Member States.

The issue before us today could well be the principal item for an initial meeting between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. There is no reason not to hold periodic joint meetings between those two bodies. African questions are the subject of over half the activities of the Security Council. It would therefore be very useful for the Working Group to draw up an accurate account of the successes and failures in Africa and to prepare a summary of experiences and lessons learned. It should also examine the way in which the Security Council deals with different African problems and recommend measures to avoid selective action by this organ, which, unfortunately, is reflected in swift action with regard to certain conflicts and in virtual passivity with regard to others.

You have asked us to be brief, Sir, and for that reason I will conclude at this point. We hope that this meeting will not be an isolated event and that we will be able to follow up the work of the Working Group on Africa in future debates.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Dorda (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I make this statement on behalf of the States members of the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CENSAD). I was asked to deliver this statement at a meeting held on 20 May. The following countries are members of CENSAD: Benin, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, the Gambia, Libya, Mali, Morocco, the Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, the Sudan, Togo, Tunisia and, as observer, Liberia.

At the outset, I extend our thanks and appreciation to you, Sir, on behalf of the members of CENSAD, for devoting today's open meeting to African issues under your country's presidency of the Council. We highly appreciate the role of the mission and Permanent Representative of Singapore, Ambassador Mahbubani, in the Security Council and throughout the United Nations.

I also wish to express my appreciation and gratitude to Ambassador Koonjul, Permanent Representative of Mauritius, for his important role. We pay tribute to his activities concerning all African issues within this Chamber and in the framework of the ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa. We also thank Ambassador Ibrahima Fall and commend his efforts. We agree with all the ideas and proposals he has put forth to date.

I also thank Ambassador Lavrov for his successful leadership of the Council last month.

We welcome Ambassador Ivan Šimonović, Permanent Representative of friendly Croatia and President of the Economic and Social Council.

Our Community, established on 4 February 1998, has a membership of 19 States that transcends the inherited colonial divisions. Its membership extends from the Atlantic Ocean in the West to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean in the East and from Nigeria and the Central African Republic in the South to the Mediterranean Sea in the North. Our Community thus reflects the object of the approach being adopted by the Security Council and the time it devotes to addressing African issues. We note with satisfaction the positive developments in Sierra Leone and Angola, as well as in

the dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Such developments give us great hope that these issues will be resolved.

While we encourage such trends, we feel that the Council's responsibility for African issues remains important. We also feel that a great deal more needs to be done to resolve these, the most complex issues in the world, in which political, historical and social factors overlap, including the negative legacy of the colonial Powers in this ethnically complex continent.

Given the special nature of African conflicts and the overlapping factors I have mentioned, the establishment of regional and subregional organizations in the continent has contributed most effectively to the prevention of certain conflicts and to the resolution of others. These organizations possess special knowledge of the various aspects of conflicts in our region.

While we commend the OAU/African Union and subregional organizations such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern African Development Community for the role they are playing, I must emphasize that CENSAD too has effectively contributed to those efforts. It has been able to assist the international community in the prevention and even the resolution of conflicts in CENSAD's geographical area and has taken a number of initiatives in that regard. We have already had the honour of informing the Secretariat and the Security Council of those initiatives.

Allow me to mention a few of the initiatives CENSAD has taken. First, with respect to the Central African Republic, CENSAD has made efforts at all levels since the beginning of the crisis in that country. It sent a delegation consisting of the Secretary for African Unity of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the Foreign Ministers of Burkina Faso and Chad and a representative of the Assistant Secretary-General of the OAU. The delegation met the concerned parties of the Central African Republic and of neighbouring countries. The meetings were attended by the Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic, General Lamine Cissé.

CENSAD Foreign Ministers held a meeting in New York on 15 November 2001, during the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, and took several decisions to ease the situation in the Central African Republic. Most important among those decisions was to mandate the Chairman of CENSAD, Sudan, to convene a mini-summit for the concerned parties with a view to resolving the dispute. The results reached at the ministerial meeting were reported promptly to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan.

In implementation of that decision, the Republic of the Sudan, in its capacity as Chairman of CENSAD, called for a mini-summit meeting, which was held in Khartoum on 3 December 2001, attended by the President of the Republic of Zambia, the Chairman of the OAU, the President of the Republic of Chad, the President of the Central African Republic, and Brigadier Abubaker Yunis, Secretary of the Provisional People's Committee for Defence in Libya. The mini-summit was also attended by the Secretary-General of the OAU, by the Secretary-General of CENSAD and by Mr. Lamine Cissé, the Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic.

The summit took decisions on the following matters: the formation of a peacekeeping, security and stabilization force in Central Africa and an appeal to the United Nations, the OAU and friendly countries to provide all forms of assistance to that force; the formation of a political committee, consisting of the Foreign Ministers of the Sudan, Chad, Libya, Burkina Faso and Gabon, the Secretary-General of the OAU, the Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of CENSAD, to continue contacts aiming at the achievement of national reconciliation in the Central African Republic; the establishment of a financial fund for the provision of urgent support to the Central African Republic, with contributions from CENSAD member States, other States, and regional and international organizations; a CENSAD request to President Patassé to consider declaring a general amnesty; and an expression of welcome to the call by the Government of the Central African Republic to dissidents to return to their homeland.

The Tripoli summit of March 2002 welcomed the recommendations of the Khartoum mini-summit and reaffirmed CENSAD's commitment to following up the process of peace, national reconciliation and reconstruction in the Central African Republic. Furthermore, the summit declared its readiness to join the efforts of the United Nations, the OAU, the Economic and Social Council and the Central African

Economic and Monetary Community, and established a joint committee to that purpose.

With respect to reconciliation between the Central African Republic and the Republic of Chad, thanks to the efforts of the chairmanship of CENSAD, a bilateral meeting was held between the Presidents of the Central African Republic and of Chad in the capital of Chad in April 2002, in which full reconciliation was reached between the two countries. Borders were reopened, and a committee was established under the chairmanship of the Secretary for African Unity of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and with membership including the Foreign Minister of Chad, the Foreign Minister of the Central African Republic and the Representative of the Secretary-General, General Cissé. The goal of the committee is to restore and normalize relations between the two countries.

With respect to the situation in Somalia, CENSAD has made, both at the level of member States and at the level of its chairmanship, several efforts for national reconciliation within the CENSAD community. Other attempts have been made to put an end to tensions between Somalia and its neighbours. In this respect, the last summit conference, held in Tripoli in March 2002, expressed support for the Transitional National Government in its efforts aiming at the rehabilitation and restructuring of Somalia. The summit extended a call to the whole international community and to the United Nations and the OAU, in particular, to consolidate efforts to enhance dialogue in the pursuit of national reconciliation and permanent peace in Somalia.

CENSAD members have long been working to bring about national reconciliation in Sudan. The Tripoli summit requested the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and the Arab Republic of Egypt to continue their efforts with regard to the joint Egyptian-Libyan initiative, which has been accepted by all parties. The summit also recommended that the initiative be coordinated with the IGAD initiative. It also recommended the establishment of a suitable mechanism for the implementation of the peace plan and for supporting the efforts of the Government of Sudan aimed at achieving peace, national reconciliation and stability in the country.

With respect to the strengthening of peace and dialogue in Chad, on 4 January 2002 the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya hosted a meeting between a delegation of the Chadian Government led by the Minister of the Interior and General Security and a delegation representing the Movement for Democracy and Justice in Chad. The meeting resulted in the signing of a peace agreement between the two parties.

It is clear from those initiatives that regional and subregional organizations play an important and effective role and contribute positively to maintaining peace and security in the area and that they strive to create a favourable political and economic climate, as well as playing an important role in assisting the United Nations in such endeavours.

The deterioration of economic and living conditions in many African countries is a major cause of the emergence, persistence and flaring up of conflicts in their many forms. These economic conditions increase tension. The heavy external debt burden of African countries and the unjust conditions imposed on many African countries by international financial institutions exacerbate the already deteriorated economic situation in their countries, making them vulnerable to dissension and instability.

Cognizant of these facts, CENSAD member States have given them priority within the comprehensive framework of conflict resolution and crisis management, because there can be no peace with poverty. Taking these realities into account, the Khartoum CENSAD summit decided to establish a special fund to assist the Central African Republic, to which all States members of the Community will contribute, despite their dire economic conditions.

The Community calls upon the United Nations, its agencies, and donor countries to give these African issues the attention they deserve, if conflict prevention and resolution efforts are to succeed in the continent.

Despite the Community's efforts, Africa's problems are so numerous and complex that the regional and subregional organizations cannot implement successful and sustainable solutions on their own. The United Nations and the Security Council must therefore take a leading role in supporting these initiatives. We, at the level of our organization, will assist them in fulfilling their roles. However, this requires financial resources to enable the countries Members of the Organization to be in a better position to play a more effective role in the establishment of stability, peace and security in this region.

The Security Council's establishment of its ad hoc Working Group on Africa was an important step towards the implementation of Security Council resolutions on the settlement of disputes in the continent. Furthermore, it will consider ways and means for enabling the Council to take the steps necessary to prevent conflicts from breaking out in some countries. On this occasion we wish to welcome the Working Group's approach to cooperation, consultation and coordination with regional and subregional organizations in our continent. In this regard, we express our readiness to coordinate, consult and cooperate with the Working Group in order to establish the appropriate procedural mechanisms for the maintenance of peace and security in the continent and for the provision of appropriate solutions to the issues that fall within the scope of the region.

While recognizing potential risks involved, we believe that there are initiatives that can be taken by the Security Council. However, we are all prepared to share in assuming that risk so that both the international community and our Community can intervene at the right moment to eliminate areas of tension before the tension escalates and spreads to other areas. Should that occur, containment would be riskier, most costly and more difficult. It is not necessary to cite examples, as such areas of tension are well known to all.

I wish to emphasize once again, on behalf of CENSAD, our readiness to cooperate, coordinate and participate in resolving the issues that fall within the scope of our Community. We also reaffirm that our commitment does not exempt the Security Council from assuming its responsibilities in this regard, as called for by the Charter of the United Nations.

Once again, we express our highest consideration to you, Mr. Minister and President, for holding this important meeting.

The President: I thank the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya for his kind words addressed to me.

I call on the representative of Australia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): Let me, like others, thank you very much indeed, Sir, for convening this meeting today. Let me also, like others, acknowledge the splendid work of Ambassador Koonjul. I should acknowledge the very helpful contributions of Ambassador Ibrahima Fall and the presence of Ambassador Šimonović too, but in the interest of brevity, let me stop heaping even more deserved praise on all of you.

As the Secretary-General has said, there is no mission that is more important to fulfilling the vision of the Charter than conflict prevention and recovery. In that context, let me make three brief points today, which I hope may in some way be helpful to the Working Group.

My first point is that successful conflict prevention and recovery must draw on political, security, economic and regional perspectives. The challenge, and also the promise, is to integrate those perspectives so as to develop comprehensive responses. We need a deeper understanding of how poverty, poor governance and conflict feed off each other. We also need to know how to encourage virtuous cycles, where peace and sustainable development are mutually supporting.

Focused and well-structured interaction between the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), as others have said, each bringing its own perspectives, can be an important part of an integrated international response to conflict. In that respect, Australia will encourage this during our term on the Economic and Social Council.

My second point — and a very welcome one — is that with the growing understanding of the causes and cures of conflict, it has to be said that our policy toolbox is fuller than it once was. For example, appreciation of the economic factors sustaining conflicts has enabled a more effective international response to the scourge of conflict diamonds, including through the Kimberley Process, in which Australia is deeply engaged. Transitional justice issues are also receiving more attention, and Australia has been active in its support for international tribunals. But caution is needed. Conflict prevention and recovery remain very inexact sciences. It is important, therefore, to encourage more local input, local knowledge and local ownership. African-driven initiatives and processes, such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development, must be supported.

Not only do we have more tools, we have also been improving the tools we have. United Nations peacekeeping, in particular, has made substantial progress and must continue to do so. Here, I should say that Australia has what we regard as a proud history of peacekeeping in Africa, including in Rwanda, Somalia, Namibia, Western Sahara, Mozambique and Ethiopia/ Eritrea.

Finally, conflict prevention and recovery in Africa must be a partnership, we believe, between the region and the wider international community. I am happy to say that Australia is a willing and engaged partner. We are, for example, working closely with Nigeria and South Africa at the highest levels of our Governments through the Commonwealth in relation to the recent election in Zimbabwe in order to engage with Zimbabwe on issues of democracy and governance following the unsatisfactory conduct of the recent presidential election.

We recognize that development assistance plays a direct and practical role in promoting peace and overcoming conflict. This year, Australia will adopt a new policy on peace, conflict and development cooperation. Delivering an aid programme that adopts a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention and recovery will be a major priority in the coming years. We have a modest but targeted development assistance programme for Africa. A major priority is poverty reduction through capacity-building, governance and the fight against HIV/AIDS, which is an immediate and long-term threat to development and security. Education is another priority, which includes supporting the African Virtual University initiative in Nairobi in cooperation with the World Bank.

The President: Before giving the floor to the representative of Spain, let me inform members that in his letter to the Presidency, when he requested participation in this debate, he also informed us that following his introductory remarks, he would like to give the floor to Mr. Hans Dahlgren, Special Representative of the Presidency of the European Union to the countries of the Mano River Union.

I call on the representative of Spain. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia — and the associated countries, Cyprus, Malta, Turkey and Liechtenstein, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union (EU) expresses its appreciation to the Security Council for convening this open debate, which offers a good opportunity to discuss the question of how the international community can work together in a coordinated way in the area of conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. The European Union welcomes the establishment of the Security Council ad hoc Working Group on conflict prevention and resolution in Africa, presided over by Ambassador Koonjul, Permanent Representative of Mauritius.

The European Union attaches great importance to partnership and enhanced cooperation between the main bodies of the United Nations, on the one hand, and between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, on the other hand. The Union welcomes the participation and statements made today in the debate by the Permanent Observer of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in New York, Ambassador Kébé, and the President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Šimonović.

It is encouraging to see that the consultations between the United Nations and the African Union are now a routine matter and that coordination between these two organizations on conflict prevention and resolution is beginning to take shape. The Union welcomes the recent report of the Secretary-General on the establishment of an ad hoc group of the Economic and Social Council on African countries emerging from conflict, since we believe the Economic and Social Council could play an important role in those countries through its coordinating role and responsibility in peace-building and economic and social reconstruction. The Union considers that the establishment of two ad hoc groups on Africa in the Economic and Social Council and in the Security Council will provide an opportunity to enhance the coordination between those two bodies in order to address the challenges of peace-building and to mobilize support for the needs of the African countries emerging from conflict.

Regional and subregional cooperation is also a matter of priority for the Union. We attach great importance to our dialogue with subregional organizations, notably the Southern African

Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). These are important building blocks for African integration and can contribute to securing peace and prosperity in the continent.

On the matter of electoral observation, the European Union is committed to long-term electoral observation in Africa in the framework of the Cotonou Agreement, which recognizes the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms among its essential elements.

We support the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in its objective of creating the conditions for development in Africa. This African-owned and African-led initiative clearly demonstrates that Africa and the EU share the same goals: sustainable economic growth and development, poverty eradication, good governance, democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, investment in human resources, the fight against corruption and conflict prevention and resolution. We look forward to the G-8 summit to be held in June in Canada and to the African summit to be held in Durban in early July.

The Union is ready to work towards a unified framework of action by the United Nations system and the international community, based on a rationalization of existing initiatives. In that regard, the final review and appraisal of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, scheduled for September 2002, will provide an opportunity to assess the role that the United Nations and the international community have played in supporting Africa's priorities, including a comprehensive review of initiatives on Africa. We note that preparations are under way for a new ad hoc working group to be chaired by the President of the General Assembly.

I have the honour now to yield the floor to Mr. Hans Dahlgren, the Special Representative of the EU Presidency for the Mano River Union countries.

Mr. Dahlgren: I can think of no better example of both the opportunities and the difficulties of conflict prevention than what is happening right now in the countries of the Mano River Union — Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

In Sierra Leone, its entire people deserve to be congratulated upon last week's historic elections. The elections mark the end of a decade of the most gruesome domestic strife, and they took place basically freely, fairly and transparently in a non-violent environment. President Kabbah should also be congratulated on his decisive election victory; this will make it so much easier for him to continue the consolidation of peace and democracy through national reconciliation and through governing in an inclusive manner.

But also the United Nations and the Security Council deserve ample credit. Through the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), almost 50,000 combatants have been disarmed and demobilized, and the United Nations troops have provided peace and security in Sierra Leone. That is good for the people of that country, but it is also a success story that is good for the United Nations. That success deserves to be sustained and must be sustained. Most of the weapons may be gone, but the country needs help to rebuild its infrastructure, its schools, its clinics and its roads. Only a fraction of what we are now spending every year on UNAMSIL would be a great help for the future rebuilding of Sierra Leone. And, equally important, peace and security will remain in Sierra Leone only if the region is stable. Conflict prevention will not succeed if fighting in neighbouring States threatens to spill over.

I suggest that one could focus on three elements to achieve regional stability in the Mano River Union — three concrete steps for conflict prevention. The first step is to build confidence through political dialogue at the highest level. One summit, organized by King Mohammed of Morocco, has already taken place in Rabat in late February. Hopefully, another one will soon take place. A good set of confidence-building measures has already been agreed upon. The European Union is ready to see how we can support their implementation, together with the United Nations and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). We recognize the important contribution made by the Mano River Women's Peace Network in these efforts.

A second element could be to find regional solutions to reverse the destructive trend of conflict and tension. This means finding joint solutions among all three States on dealing with the disarmament and demobilization of combatants; solutions to stop the illegal flows of small arms and light weapons; solutions to help reintegrate the hundreds of thousands

of refugees who have fled. The European Union hopes to work closely with the new United Nations Office in West Africa, in Dakar, to promote such solutions.

A third element could be to build a democratic culture in all three countries to support peace-building activities that involve the entire population, to build a culture of peace, as someone said in this debate. Sierra Leone has shown what can be done. We would like to see the same basic democratic values reflected when Guinea and Liberia prepare for their elections. That also means involving civil society groups, including political parties, in a fair and open dialogue on the future of each country.

Our immediate attention these days may be focused on the crisis in Liberia. Again, fighting there has caused tens of thousands of innocent people to move, becoming internally displaced or refugees in other States. Immense human suffering has followed. There is obviously a clear need to get the warring parties to talk to each other and stop fighting. There is no military solution to this crisis either. And, therefore, last week's ECOWAS initiative to offer instant mediation is a welcome first step. In the long run, of course, Liberia also needs a process of national reconciliation with all stakeholders involved.

The international community showed courage at a critical time for Sierra Leone. It accepted the challenge to help provide stability. If you travel now to any of the villages in Sierra Leone, you can see how people have returned to their deserted homes. You can see how they rejoice at being able to live normal lives again. Then you can understand how wise that commitment was.

In order not to risk all that has been achieved in Sierra Leone it would be equally wise to work together towards conflict prevention in the entire Mano River region. That is a primary responsibility of the Security Council. It is an important assignment on the agenda of the ad hoc Working Group, and the European Union is ready to play its role in that joint effort.

The President: Before inviting the next speaker to take the floor, let me announce that I intend to suspend this meeting at around 1.30 p.m.

I now call on the representative of Djibouti, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti): Let me first express my greetings to you, Mr. President. I am very delighted to see you chairing this meeting today, thus underscoring the importance that Singapore attaches to Africa in general and to the prevention and resolution of conflict in Africa in particular. Our congratulations go also to Ambassador Mahbubani and to his efficient and capable staff, with whom we enjoy the best of relations.

May I also pay a well-deserved tribute to Ambassador Koonjul of Mauritius for steering the ad hoc Working Group into action. I truly commend him for his earnest attempts to cooperate, liaise and contribute with respect to all issues of interest to us, specifically African issues.

I would also like to echo fully and endorse the sincere sentiments expressed by Ambassador Kébé towards Mr. Fall. Mr. Fall has been a pillar of moderation and a source of wise counsel. This morning he made an eloquent statement that was clear testimony to his insightful appreciation of African issues.

Perhaps the heart of the matter and why we are here again today in a public meeting on the situation in Africa is contained in the second paragraph of Ambassador Koonjul's letter of 10 January 2002 addressed to the Council President, who happened to be himself at that time (S/2002/46). Here Ambassador Koonjul observed that the Council had been dealing with almost all the conflict situations in Africa, but, unfortunately, we are not getting the desired overall results.

It is proposed therefore that the issues be revisited, attention be refocused on Africa, a proactive approach for the continent be devised and a workable set of recommendations be worked out. We have the 31 January statement laying out in concrete terms the framework for Council actions, which resulted in the establishment of the ad hoc Working Group, which has already elaborated its programme of work, which is the basis for this meeting today.

The analysis of the root causes of the conflicts in Africa has occupied this Council for too long, but it took a dramatic turn with the 1998 report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (S/1998/318). For the first time, the links between the conflicts in Africa and, inter alia, poverty and development were clearly spelled out. In other words, the problems have been identified and solutions have been proposed. What remains to be done

has always been to put these recommendations into practice and to gather the resources necessary to guarantee their success, of course always trying to put in place the structures and mechanisms to promote their implementation.

In this respect, we welcome the programme of work proposed by the ad hoc Working Group. Some of the issues identified are technical in nature; some call for strengthening and enhancing coordination as well as consultation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and subregional organizations; and some require further inputs in clarifying the roles and relationships of certain actors.

While all this merits discussion, as should be the case — and I do concur with the inputs outlined by colleagues who preceded me this morning — I would also like to draw the attention of the Council to the broader and larger question that needs a frank and honest response: why does the situation persist despite all the initiatives and efforts to tackle the pernicious issues of conflict situations in Africa?

Among the broader issues that require focus and commitment, in our view, is the inability to adopt effective, timely and necessary measures to deal with conflict situations in Africa. Where there is intervention after a lapse of time, mandates and resources available for the operations are not consonant with the requirements of the situation. Where the strategic, political and economic importance of a conflict is deemed significant to some parties, usually a movement towards early action is discernible. Certain conflicts, however, are left to take their own course. With that inaction, incalculable loss of lives and destruction are experienced, and it takes years and generations to overcome the attendant stagnation and decay of economic activities.

I am raising these broader but core issues because there is a certain sense of déjà-vu with regard to the propensity to meet, discuss and analyse Africa's condition. Both the Council and the General Assembly have thoroughly examined the 1998 definitive report of the Secretary-General. The implementation of the recommendations, however, has been indecisive and slow, particularly in light of African expectations.

This brings us to another question in the context of addressing broader issues. Can the Council be even-handed in addressing all conflicts in the world, but particularly African conflicts?

Finally, we hope that we may be near the point where talk, analysis and proposals are concluded, and that we move on to vigorous, comprehensive and meaningful measures, instituted in coordination with the OAU, African subregions, the donor community and the Economic and Social Council in order to combine the experiences, capabilities and resources of all concerned for the benefit of the lives of people crying for help.

The President: I thank the representative of Djibouti for the kind words addressed to my delegation.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of India. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Gopinathan (India): We welcome you, Sir, to the Council and would like to convey our deep appreciation of the fine contribution that Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani and his dedicated team have been making to the work of Council. Your delegation's web site for its work in the Council presidency merits commendation. We hope that it will serve as an example for other delegations, including ours. We would also like to congratulate Ambassador Lavrov for his stewardship of the Council during a particularly demanding period last month.

We would like to place on record our appreciation of Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul for the work done by the ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa. Mauritius, a beacon of peace, democracy, harmony and prosperity, is a shining example not just for Africa, but for the rest of the world. We are confident that under Ambassador Koonjul's guidance the Working Group will make a significant contribution to the work of the United Nations, especially that of the Council, towards resolving conflicts in Africa.

At the Security Council's open meeting on 29 January 2002, we made a detailed statement sharing our perspective of what needs to be done for promoting peace and resolving conflicts in Africa. We shall therefore focus on only some of the issues that have been listed in the guidelines.

There is the matter of enhancing economic coordination with the Economic and Social Council. While economic and social aspects may have a bearing on peace and security, the interface between these two

elements, which are dealt with by the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council respectively, should be coordinated by the General Assembly, the highest intergovernmental body of the United Nations, to which both the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council report. Further, the modalities of cooperation between these two bodies need to be first discussed within each so as not to repeat the situation that occurred last year when efforts to hold a meeting between the two Council's had to be aborted. We understand that as yet there is no agreement in the Economic and Social Council on the modalities of cooperation with the Security Council, and that the Economic and Social Council has also not yet set up an ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict.

In our view, this issue needs further in-depth, thorough examination, keeping in view the roles of the two bodies as enshrined in the Charter. Post-conflict peace-building does not fall within the purview of the Security Council, but lies with other bodies and organs of the United Nations which are better placed to deal with this task. As and when these bodies require the involvement and the cooperation of the Security Council, they would invite it.

With regard to confidence-building in the region of the Mano River Union, we welcome the Secretary General's decision to establish the United Nations Regional Office in West Africa. We are confident that under the able stewardship of Mr. Ibrahima Fall the Office will be able to contribute to the efforts of the Mano River Union countries as well as other subregional groups to prevent and resolve conflicts in the region.

On the subject of election observation, we agree that free and fair elections are crucial for promoting and strengthening democracies. As the largest democracy in the world, we are fully committed to the democratic ideal. Indeed, election observation, where requested by the concerned State, contributes to confidence in the electoral process, particularly in nascent democracies. The antithesis of elections is usurping power by overthrowing elected governments. By its presidential statement S/PRST/2002/2 of 31 January 2002, the Council expressed its strong support for the Organization of African Unity (OAU) decision to deny recognition to Governments that come to power through unconstitutional means. Before the Council indulges in assisting in election observation, it must, in line with its position articulated in the statement of 31 January 2002, take a very clear and categorical position against military coups and unconstitutional changes in the Governments, no matter where they occur. Embracing military dictators and considering them to be a part of a solution, rather than the problem that they truly are, sends a very wrong message.

Regarding the establishment of a group of friends for specific conflict situations, we agree that this is a useful modality that can play a positive role provided such a group is the genuine friend of all the parties to the conflict and enjoys their confidence as a legitimate interlocutor. Otherwise, the group would be seen as taking sides or interfering and would not serve the cause of peace, but only complicate the situation further.

As far as cooperation with OAU and subregional organizations, we fully support the idea that the ad hoc Working Group should establish close links with OAU and subregional organizations. In fact, we would like to take this opportunity to applaud the work done by the OAU and many subregional groups of Africa with limited resources and, often, without political and financial support from outside. However, the maintenance of international peace and security is first and foremost the responsibility of the Council, from which there should be no derogation in the name of burden-sharing or division of work. The Council must not transfer its responsibility or take a back seat.

Regarding invitations to representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), universities and academia in the work of the Group, we agree that NGOs and civil society can play an important role. We do recognise this, and we support and encourage them. But experience has shown that this works mainly in the economic and social fields and in respect of humanitarian assistance. Maintenance of peace and security is far more complex and, by definition, more difficult and mostly beyond their capacity. This is a responsibility which devolves primarily on States or intergovernmental organizations. However, if the Working Group considers the need to draw on the expertise of civil society in some specific areas, we would not object.

Let me now come to a couple of areas that appear to have been missed and which the Council may consider adding to the programme of work of the ad

hoc Working Group. While there have been references to inviting components of civil society to participate in the work of the Working Group, there is no reference to participation by non-members of the Council. This must have been an inadvertent omission, as it could not have been the intention of the Council to give civil society a role more prominent than non-members in its subsidiary organs. With this understanding, we believe that the Council should now invite non-members to participate in the work of other subsidiary bodies as a matter of course. We welcome this as an additional element in demonstrating transparency in the work of the Council and commend this refreshing approach.

In the presidential statement of 31 January 2002, the Council, bearing in mind the linkages between conflicts in Africa and the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons, reaffirmed its continued commitment to addressing this problem. We do hope that a clear and sharp focus will be given to this issue by the ad hoc Working Group, as much devastation and loss of life has been caused by illicit arms and weapons. The Council must come out strongly against illicit arms traffickers and countries that either facilitate this trade or turn a blind eye towards it. It must also take resolute action against the supply of arms and weapons to non-State actors.

We share the feeling of many African and other members of the United Nations that the Council does not give the same attention or devote the same level of resources to addressing African issues as compared to problems elsewhere or where the interests of some Council members are involved. This needs to be addressed seriously, sincerely and squarely. The message must go out to African countries that, for the Council, Africa's problems are as important as, if not more important than, other problems before the Council. We support the work of the ad hoc Working Group, which has the potential to substantially contribute to promoting peace and resolving conflicts in Africa. Its focus, therefore, should be on actions that are within the mandate of the Council, so that its recommendations can be acted upon by the Council expeditiously.

The President: I thank the representative of India for his kind words addressed to my delegation.

I now give the floor to the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Motomura (Japan): I would like to express, on behalf of the Government of Japan, my appreciation to you, Sir, for convening this debate and for giving non-members of the Security Council, particularly countries from Africa, an opportunity to speak on the working methods of the ad hoc Working Group. I would also like to thank Ambassador Koonjul of Mauritius for his briefing on the activities of the Working Group; and Ambassador Ivan Šimonović, President of the Economic and Social Council; Ambassador Amadou Kébé, Permanent Observer of the Organization of African Unity (OAU); and Mr. Ibrahima Fall, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for their very informative statements.

Convinced that world stability and prosperity will not prevail in the 21st century unless the problems of Africa are resolved, the Government of Japan has addressed the situation in Africa as one of the most important foreign policy issues for Japan. From that standpoint, I would like today to discuss three points with respect to the activities of the Working Group.

The first point concerns the enhancement of cooperation with the Economic and Social Council, as indicated in the mandate of the Working Group. We have stressed that for effective conflict prevention it is imperative to take a comprehensive approach that integrates political, economic, social and humanitarian measures based on requirements from moment to moment. Such approach should be applied to all steps, from conflict prevention to post-conflict peacemaking. Furthermore, it goes without saying that it is important to ensure cooperation and coordination among the entities engaged in conflict prevention. To achieve lasting solutions to the conflicts in Africa, it is again necessary to take a comprehensive approach that envisions not only traditional peacekeeping operations, but also the observation of elections and the demilitarization, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, as well as post-conflict assistance for reconstruction and development. I believe such a comprehensive approach requires well-coordinated cooperation between the work of the Security Council, which bears primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and that of the Economic and Social Council, whose function is to make recommendations to the General Assembly, the United Nations Member States and the specialized agencies concerned with international economic and

social problems. I therefore welcome the fact that the Working Group is focusing on this issue.

As referred to in the programme of the Working Group, the Economic and Social Council is now carefully considering the possible establishment of an ad hoc advisory group on emerging conflicts in African countries in order to encourage the international community to extend its support during the transition from peacekeeping to peacemaking. Although the Economic and Social Council has not yet concluded its work, it is important to avoid any duplication of work by the two groups. Thus, if such advisory group is in fact established, it should co-organize meetings with the Working Group and jointly propose ways of bridging the gap between emergency relief activities during a conflict, and reconstruction and development assistance once a conflict has been resolved. In doing so, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council could together present an entire roadmap for conflict resolution and the achievement of lasting peace.

The second point I would like to raise concerns the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which was initiated by the African countries themselves. As preconditions for development, NEPAD stresses such aspects as the importance of prevention, management and resolution of conflicts; peace enforcement, peacekeeping and peacemaking; post-conflict reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction; and issues relating to small arms and demining. That approach coincides with the comprehensive approach I have just described. I look forward to a constructive dialogue between the Working Group and the Organization of African Unity/ African Union on this issue.

My third point concerns the transparency of the Working Group's activities. Although the Group is essentially an informal body, in focusing on measures to deal with a post-conflict situation while a conflict is coming to a resolution, it could benefit from input by non-members of the Security Council that have the experience and ability to play a major role in post-conflict reconstruction and development assistance. In that sense, we consider today's debate quite useful, and we hope that interested non-members of the Security Council will be briefed on its activities, if possible, at each meeting of the Group.

The international situation continues to be extremely tenuous owing in large part to the political and economic impact of the terrorist attacks in the United States last September. But even under such circumstances, the international community needs to strengthen its joint efforts to resolve the conflicts that Africa is now facing. The international community must provide proactive and continuous support for the ownership efforts initiated by African countries themselves.

At the end of 2003, the Government of Japan expects to convene the third Tokyo International Conference on African Development. Designating the year or so leading up to that event as the Year for Soaring Cooperation with Africa, the Government of Japan will take concrete measures further to enhance Japan's policies towards Africa.

In closing, let me express our hope that, under the leadership of Ambassador Koonjul, the Working Group will achieve positive results contributing to the efforts of the international community, including those of Japan.

The President: There are a number of speakers remaining on my list. In view of the lateness of the hour, and with the concurrence of Council members, I shall suspend the meeting now and resume it at 4 o'clock this afternoon.

The meeting was suspended at 1.35 p.m.